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ABSTRACT

This study identified the personality traits of both student teachers and cooperating teachers that were related to the student teachers' perception of the student teaching experience. The Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16 P.F.) measured personality traits and the Purdue Student Teacher Opinionnaire (PSTO) measured the perception of the student teaching experience. Seventy-six secondary student teachers were administered the 16 P.F. and the PSTO; their cooperating teachers were administered the 16 P.F. All scores were factor analyzed to determine which personality factors were related to higher opinions of the student teaching experiences. The relationships between student and cooperating teacher personality differences and the student teachers' perception of student teaching were also examined. Results indicated that student teachers who were Emotionally Stable (C), Humble (E), and Shrewd (N) expressed high opinions of the student teaching experience. They also expressed high opinions of the student teaching experience when the cooperating teachers were Practical (M), Conservative (Q1), and Subdued (IV). Two tables of statistical data are included. (BRB)

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PERSONALITIES AND PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT TEACHING

By

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INTRODUCTION

Research in the area of qualification, selection, and assignment of cooperating teachers supports the thesis that the personalities of cooperating teachers and student teachers play an important role in the student teaching experience. It is also indicated that while personality traits are recognized as pertinent variables, most student teaching programs have not progressed beyond the recognition stage. Personality traits are generally not considered, and in fact are not known, when cooperating teachers are selected and student teachers are assigned.

A survey of the research in the area of student teacher and cooperating teacher personalities revealed that grades in student teaching, ratings in student teaching, and measures of success in student teaching have been related to personalities. McFadden reported that specific psychological dimensions tended to discriminate differentially success rated groups of student teachers.[1] McFadden studied both elementary and secondary student teachers using the Survey of Interpersonal Valuos (SIV), the Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory (MTAI), and the California Psychological Inventory (CPI). He also indicated that differences existed, with respect to the relevant psychological characteristics involved, between elementary and secondary student teachers.

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[1]Jack McFadden, "The Discrimination of Student Teaching Performance on the Basis of Psychological Attributes," Journal of Educational Research, 61:217, January, 1968.

McClain used the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16 P.F.) in a study of success in student teaching.[2] His sample consisted of 196 secondary student teachers at the University of Tennessee. McClain indicated that a difference in personality traits related to success existed between men and women student teachers in the sample of his study. Henjum reported that specific personality traits, as measured by the 16 P.F., were related to letter grades in student teaching.[3] He also concluded that specific personality traits may be more important for junior high school student teachers than for senior high school student teachers. Burk studied female elementary student teachers and the relationships of personalities to student teaching marks, supervisors' reports, and rankings of the relationships by university officials.[4] The personality instrument employed was the 16 P.F. Burk reported that the ranking by university officials was not significantly related to any personality trait as measured by the 16 P.F. The remaining criteria, however, resulted in three times the number of relationships related significantly than would have been expected by chance. Measures and ratings of success of classroom teachers who were not serving as

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[2]Edwin W. McClain, "Sixteen P.F. Scores and Success in Student Teaching," Journal of Teacher Education, 19:25-32, Spring, 1968.

[3]Arnold Henjum, "A Study of the Significance of Student Teachers' Personality Characteristics," Journal of Teacher Education, 20:143-147, Summer, 1969.

[4]Donald Duane Burk, "Personality Characteristics of Student Teachers and Their Supervisors," (unpublished Doctor's Dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1969), p. 102.

cooperating teachers have been related to the possession of specific personality traits as measured by the 16 P.F. Lamke,[5] Erickson,[6] and Montross.[7]

It was a major premise of this study that how the student teacher perceives the student teaching experience is as important or perhaps more important than the grade or rating which he receives in student teaching. This concept was reinforced by Lowther when he reported that the criterion of success frequently suggested by student teachers was not achievement of instructional objectives.[8] It was, rather, the amount of personal satisfaction the experience provided.

PROCEDURES

This study sought to identify personality traits of student teachers and cooperating teachers which were related to the student teachers' perception of the student teaching experience. The Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16 P.F.) was employed in the measurement of personality traits. The student teachers' perception of the student teaching experience was measured by the Purdue Student Teacher

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[5]Tom A. Lamke, "Personality and Teaching Success," Journal of Experimental Education, 20:217-50, December, 1951.

[6]Harley E. Erickson, "A Factorial Study of Teaching Ability," Journal of Experimental Education, 23:1-39, September, 1954.

[7]Harold W. Montross, "Temperament and Teaching Success," Journal of Experimental Education, 23:73-97, September, 1954.

[8]Malcolm A. Lowther, "Successful and Unsuccessful Experience of Student Teachers in Secondary Education," Contemporary Education, 41:272-275, May, 1970.

Opinionnaire (PSTO). The seventy-six secondary student teachers' 16 P.F. scores, their cooperating teachers' 16 P.F. scores, and the student teachers' PSTO scores were factor analyzed to determine which personality factors were related to higher opinions of the student teaching experience. The relationships between student teacher and cooperating teacher personality differences and the student teachers' perception of student teaching were also examined by factor analysis.

ANALYSIS

The loadings on varimax factors I, II, and III contain no loadings on the PSTO factor scores which are significantly large or that would define the factors. Varimax factor IV is defined primarily by PSTO factor scores. The value of .386 is the critical value at the .05 level of significance for the factor loadings in Table I.[9] From the number of significantly large loadings on factor IV, the factor could properly be named: "High Student Teacher Opinions of the Student Teaching Experience."

The loadings on varimax factor IV indicated that student teachers had higher opinions of the student teaching experience in situations where:

(1) The student teachers were more emotionally mature, humble, accommodating, and polished. The related 16 P.F. variables are (C), Emotionally Stable, (E), Humble, and (N), Shrewd.

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[9]Harry H. Harman, Modern Factor Analysis, (Chicago, and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 435.

(2) The cooperating teachers were more practical, anxious to do the right thing, respective of established ideas, and subdued. The related 16 P.F. variables are (M), Practical, (Q_1), Conservative, and (IV), Subduedness.

INSERT TABLE I
ABOUT HERE

The first varimax factor in Table II could properly be named: "High Student Teacher Opinions of the Student Teaching Experience." There were, however, no loadings on varimax factor I for the 16 P.F. absolute value differences which were equal to or greater than .381. The value of .381 is the critical value at the .05 level of significance for the factor loadings in Table II. Hence, no relationships significant at the .05 level were found between absolute value differences on personality traits and the student teachers' perception of student teaching. None of the loadings on the PSTO factor scores were significantly large on varimax factors II, III, and IV in Table II.

The loading of .32 on 16 P.F. variable IV, Subduedness vs. Independence, while not significant at the .05 level, was large enough to indicate a relationship. From the PSTO factor loadings on varimax factor I and the loadings on 16 P.F. variable IV, it was indicated that the student teachers tended to exhibit higher opinions of the student teaching experience in situations where the student teacher and the cooperating teacher were unlike on 16 P.F. variable IV, Subduedness vs. Independence.

INSERT TABLE II
ABOUT HERE

SUMMARY

The possession of specific personality traits by student teachers, as measured by the 16 P.F., are related to high opinions of student teaching. The student teachers who were more Emotionally Stable, (C), Humble, (E), and Shrewd, (N), tended to express high opinions of the student teaching experience. The student teachers tended to express high opinions of the student teaching experience in situations where the cooperating teachers were more Practical, (M), Conservative, (Q_1), and Subdued, (IV).

A possible explanation of these apparent indications is that student teachers' opinions and perceptions were under investigation. Considering that student teachers are often apprehensive and have misgivings about student teaching, it seems plausible to expect that more practical and conservative personality types in cooperating teachers would give the student teachers a better sense of security and well-being resulting in higher expressed opinions of the student teaching experience. The results indicate that while the possession of specific traits of personality by the student teachers and the cooperating teachers are related to how the student teachers perceive the experience, likeness or unlikeness on most traits of personality have little relationship to the opinions of the student teachers.

Many qualifications have been recommended for the certification of cooperating teachers. Such qualifications as three years teaching experience, principal's recommendation, a master's degree, and a graduate level course in student teaching supervision are required in part or in whole by many teacher education institutions. The results of this study indicate that personality traits should also be considered when cooperating teachers are selected.

Table 1

Varimax Factor Loadings of PSTO Data,
Student Teacher 16 P.F. Data, And
Cooperating Teacher
16 P.F. Data

N = 76

Variable	Factor Loading			
	I	II	III	IV
PSTO Factor Scores[a]				
1	-08	-16	-01	45
2	-11	32	-24	50
3	15	-25	-08	47
4	-03	-34	-04	42
5	04	03	-01	58
6	-01	10	02	44
7	37	-01	-01	55
8	-02	03	-19	61
9	-16	12	06	12
10	27	01	09	57
11	28	16	03	36
12	10	03	-05	67
16 P.F. Scores For Student Teachers[a]				
A	46	-19	11	08
B	03	12	21	-26
C	56	12	-21	41
E	22	18	58	-44
F	70	-06	29	-22
G	36	-20	-45	11
H	82	14	07	-05
I	06	-36	36	02
L	-18	-06	29	-36
M	-32	20	32	-16
N	-10	00	-41	39
O	-47	-32	00	-16
Q_1	-12	10	56	-34
Q_2	-60	11	15	00
Q_3	47	-07	-43	29
Q_4	-47	-20	24	-26
I	-72	-21	26	-33
II	86	05	28	-20
III	10	36	-31	-01
IV	-39	25	55	-34

Table I (Continued)

	16 P. F. Scores for Cooperating Teachers[a]			
A	10	43	47	15
B	-19	-11	-10	-11
C	17	71	-04	02
E	03	36	-44	-35
F	13	67	04	-02
G	07	10	-02	28
H	05	71	02	-14
I	06	-06	63	-04
L	-03	-33	-47	-24
M	-06	00	-09	-41
N	-01	-20	46	36
O	15	-50	04	-10
Q_1	-04	05	-54	-44
Q_2	-09	-55	-12	-06
Q_3	-10	17	08	30
Q_4	31	-61	04	-13
I	16	-80	-07	-17
II	11	79	03	-11
III	-01	17	-62	06
IV	-10	-20	-57	-51

[a]Decimal points have been omitted.

Table II

Varimax Factor Loadings of PSTO Data And Absolute Value Differences of Student Teacher and Cooperating Teacher 16 P.F. Data

N = 76

Variable	Factor Loading			
	I	II	III	IV
PSTO Factor Scores[a]				
1	48	-05	-04	20
2	42	-05	-21	03
3	59	25	21	11
4	41	08	04	33
5	71	-03	-15	-17
6	52	18	22	06
7	66	05	09	-03
8	66	23	03	06
9	16	-08	-06	-30
10	60	-06	-13	14
11	55	-04	-05	23
12	75	-11	-05	-21
16 P.F. Absolute Value Difference Scores For Student Teachers and Cooperating Teachers[a]				
A	-06	04	08	05
B	05	-47	-06	14
C	08	38	-06	15
E	10	00	26	30
F	-11	08	57	43
G	01	-06	00	-04
H	02	02	62	17
I	05	-24	-42	50
L	-23	-05	-16	41
M	19	47	-21	07
N	-08	-26	08	59
O	08	49	-19	-02
Q_1	08	-06	00	55
Q_2	24	-16	63	-19
Q_3	25	19	-05	27
Q_4	-22	68	09	25
I	03	82	08	28
II	-05	06	77	07
III	-06	06	-53	31
IV	32	09	19	62

[a]Decimal points have been omitted.

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